(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) In this year's budget, LPG for domestic use and kerosene for public distribution system (PDS) have been fully exempted from both customs and excise duties. As regards kerosene for other than PDS use, the import duty has been reduced from 20% to 10%.

Industry Friendly Tax Structure

77. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are working on an industry friendly tax structure;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have appointed a committee for streamling the duty structure of petroleum products; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Irregularities in banks

78. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the complete details of irregularities in various banks during the last three years;

(b) the steps taken against such banks; and

(c) what corrective steps have been initiated to stop recurrence of such irregularities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that frauds have been observed in the home loan and personal loan

segments. The other areas where frauds have occurred are credit portfolio, credit cards, deposit accounts, forged and fake demand drafts/cheques etc. Details of frauds in public sector banks during the last three years are given below:

Year	All Frauds		Out of which Rs. 1 crore and above	
	No.	Amt. (Rs. crores)	No.	Amt. (Rs. crores)
2001-02	1409	476.09	60	433.93
2002-03	1744	399.55	62	302.71
2003-04	2207	653.50	66	359.18

(b) Various steps are taken against the individual bank in case irregularities are noticed. The reasons for irregularities are investigated by RBI to ensure that the bank takes preventive measures to avoid recurrence of such irregularities. Strict follow up for rectification of irregularities observed during the Annual Financial Inspection of the bank is done by RBI. A penalty is also imposed on the banks for violation of RBI directives.

(c) RBI has taken following concrete steps to stop recurrence of frauds in future;

(1) RBI has been cautioning banks from time to time against fraudsters and their *modus operandi.*

(2) RBI has also been pleading with State Governments for bringing certain progressive measures such as making the encumbrance of the banks on the mortgaged properties with the Registrar of Assurances by payment of a nominal fee as this measure will go a long way in arresting multiple creation of mortgages by the fraudsters.

(3) Steps have also been taken to vigorously monitor the large value frauds. All fraud cuses involving Rs. 1 crore and above are monitored by Department of Banking Supervision (DBS) of RBI and put up to the Board of Financial Supervision on a quarterly basis. Frauds involving Rs. 1 lakh and above but less than Rs. 1 crore are monitored by the Regional Offices of DBS.

(4) In addition, RBI has instructed banks to carry out more intensive

scrutiny of candidates at the time of recruitment and initiate disciplinary action promptly and awarding exemplary punishment to delinquent employees.

Foreign exchange reserves

79. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of India's total foreign exchange reserves as on 1 st January, 2005;

(b) whether it is proposed to withdraw a part of the forex reserves to fund the infrastructure development;

(c) if so, whether any guidelines have been laid down in this regard;

(d) if answer to (b) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor; and

(e) in what ways it is proposed to utilise huge forex reserves?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) India's foreign exchange reserves stood at US$131.2 billion on December 31, 2004.

(b) to (d) Any decision to utilise a part of India's foreign exchange reserves for funding domestic projects requires a careful assessment, *inter alia,* of the impact of such a measure on the fiscal situation, money supply, exchange rate, domestic interest rates, reserve adequacy and inflation. An informed debate, on the feasibility of such an utilisation, is currently on.

(e) The foreign exchange reserves will continue to be invested as per the relevant provisions of the RBI Act (1934) based on the considerations of safety, liquidity and return.

Structural adjustment loan for Maharashtra

80. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is **a** fact that the State Government of Maharashtra has submitted **a** proposal of 10 thousand crores as a structural adjustment loan from World Bank through Government of India;